

THE LEISURE HOUR.

A FAMILY JOURNAL OF INSTRUCTION AND RECREATION.

"BEHOLD IN THESE WHAT LEISURE HOURS DEMAND,—AMUSEMENT AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE HAND IN HAND."—*Cooper.*



MRS. CRAMP AT THE ROYAL OAK.

THE MAN IN POSSESSION.

BY MRS. PROSSER.

CHAPTER XIX.—A MORNING CALL.

It will be but kind to go to Torbury, and see how Mrs. Porter is, and how her man Ned is, and how Tom Ricketts is, who shod the mare under such unfavourable circumstances. We left Mrs. Porter some time ago staring at the open door, and the vacant floor, where her eyes had closed on the sleeping figure of farmer Robinson. She had been in a

state of great excitement since then. The news of all that had happened, and the report, of course, of much more, had brought a crowd of inquirers and a rich harvest of customers to the house, and, whatever she might say, she was inwardly well pleased with the adventure that paid so well. The police, after making all inquiries, could find no clue to the assailants; and who it was that robbed the farmer, if he had been robbed, or ducked the unfortunate Ned, none could divine. Some said it was a lark, some said it was the mysterious maro

alluded to by Mr. Ricketts; but the police based their researches on the former supposition, as no suspicious-looking persons had been seen lurking about the neighbourhood at the time. The drovers fell under suspicion, but Ned solemnly shook his head, and declared it was no drover that sent him into the washdyke.

Mr. Robinson, when he awoke in the morning, sober, and with a bad headache, as the doctor had prophesied, rose from his hard bed almost as much surprised at the horizontal figure of Mrs. Porter, with her eyes shut and her mouth wide open on the settle, as she was afterwards to find him gone. He was very uncomfortable, very confused, very cold, and not a little vexed and ashamed, as the truth dawned on him that the Rose and Crown had once more brought him into trouble. He went out to look for his horse, but no horse was in the stable. After a moment's hesitation he thought he would try to walk home, a seemingly hopeless undertaking; but he resolved to make an effort. Beyond his hopes, in a short deviation of the lane-like road, he found his horse grazing quietly under the hedge. The saddle was loose and a little twisted, but he soon put that right, and rode away to make peace with his wife, and pledge himself, as he had so often done before, never to enter the Rose and Crown again. He strengthened in his resolve as he drew nearer home, and felt so valorous in his self-confidence when he got there, that the simple heart he had so often deceived into hope, once more trusted him, and forgave all in the firm persuasion of a happy reformation. By degrees, as he went over in his own mind the adventures of the previous night, it dawned on him that he had in some way been pushed from his horse. He could remember the bridle being held, and his feet being taken out of the stirrups. All the rest was clouded.

The inquiry of his wife after his pocket-book raised a new train of thoughts. His pocket-book! it must be in his pocket! No, no pocket-book there! Alarm now filled his heart. Those papers that were intrusted to him for especial safety, to be delivered to Mr. Keriol—where were they? Most probably lying in the ditch, for no one would take them, valueless to all but the parties concerned, and leave his watch and silver guard untouched.

To send and institute a search was the next thing to be done—a search that the police had already made, but fruitlessly. The subject was rife for days and days, and after various other theories had been started, Mrs. Porter, nodding her head in the direction of Torbury Mill, said, "I shouldn't wonder if it was some of our neighbours, as we won't mention, as have had to do with this business; there's vagrands of all kinds gets about there, and—why—if there isn't the woman down in the road yonder!"

And sure enough, Mrs. Cramp, with several of her daughters, was advancing, with all the ease and self-complacency of a well-bred lady who was going to make a very acceptable call, towards the Royal Oak.

"How d'ye do, Mrs. Porter, ma'am," she exclaimed, in a sympathising, gossip tone, advancing to the disconcerted landlady, who was afraid of offending her, lest she should lose her fowls by way of revenge.

"I was sorry to death to hear of the trouble you'd been in, and I said I'd just walk down to know the rights of it," she added, passing the customers who were there, and taking a seat near the fire.

"You needn't a follow me in," she cried to her daughters, who were making for as good a berth. "Go and get a stick or two, and mind you never go nearst the hedges; you'll find a plenty on the fields after last night's blow."

The Misses Cramp looked disappointed, but retired without any demur to have a game in the field, and see who could pull the largest sticks from a wood-stack that lay too much exposed to escape the Cramp liberal principles.

"And so you had a gentleman drowned, and you was all near murdered?" said Mrs. Cramp, spreading her hands wide open before the genial blaze. "Well, I never did hear of such times; but you've come over it wonderful well, by the help of good living. It's a surprising help to bearing things, if they're ever so bad, is that of eating and drinking, especially when it's good, and you've got plenty of it."

Mrs. Cramp sighed at the vision she had conjured up, and having well warmed her hands, proceeded to dry her tattered shoes, which had left very decided marks on the floor, and now threatened to rust the bright fender on which they were so unceremoniously placed. Mrs. Porter did her best to hide her disgust, and told her as much as she thought needful to satisfy her, hoping she would be satisfied and go. But Mrs. Cramp had two ends in view. Without entering into the philosophy of the fact of man's being a compound of mind and matter, she was keenly alive to its truth, and she was just now intent on the claims of both her component parts. She wished to do justice to her mind, also to attend to her body; and having heard from Mrs. Porter as much as satisfied her curiosity, she proceeded to try for a cure for the hunger which the thought of good living had made her feel more keenly than usual; so after a pause, spreading her hands once more before the fire she said,—

"Well, it's sure a very bad way the country's in, when things go on in this sort of a manner, and so much trouble and wickedness as there is about. I believe we should have been robbed and plundered long ago in our lonely place, only we've got nothing that folks would steal, which is a poor sort of comfort, you'll say. Indeed, we was obliged, Cramp and me, to part with our biggest bedstead and carry it ourselves to the man as bought it, for less than the very sacking cost; but when one is in wants of bread, Mrs. Porter, you see it's anything one will do."

Mrs. Porter was aware that there were few things, with the exception of working, that Mr. and Mrs. Cramp would not do, to get what they wanted. She got more and more fidgety: her customers were going off one by one, for personal contact with Mrs. Cramp was not attractive.

"Your pot smells lovely!" said Mrs. Cramp, looking at the steam that encircled the crane that held it.

"It won't be done this long time," said Mrs. Porter, "or I'd offer you a sup; but if you'd take a bit of bread and cheese, you shall have it and welcome."

Welcome! Oh, Mrs. Porter! but the cost of her company, and the balm of her departure, were worth the investment.

"Thank you kindly," said Mrs. Cramp; "but if it was the same to you, I'll have a sup of the broth. Weak broth suits me very well, and I'm partial to it, and my appetite has been but poor since I got a fright by a gipsy."

There was no help for it. Mrs. Porter was obliged to ladle out a basin of broth from the pot, and Mrs. Cramp looked the picture of human felicity as she sat enjoying it, her feet still on the fender and her face towards the fire.

"And what a set them gipsies is!" she remarked, as she stirred the broth to get it cool; "I had the darest creature up at the mill yesterday that ever you beheld."

"I hope she'll keep from my fowls," said Mrs. Porter, significantly, for she was fast losing her guard over her temper.

"You'd best keep 'em up o' nights, and lock your places," said Mrs. Cramp, looking steadily at the broth. "I believe she was after no good with us. She threatened to burn the house over our heads if I wouldn't give her a bit; me, that had nothing but a sup of broth, nothing to compare with this, from the parson's!"

"Ah, dear!" sighed Mrs. Porter, looking at the basin to see how much longer it would take to finish it.

"Yes, you see, I'd had a friend to call of me, and we sat a talking a bit, and my husband and a man with him came from this direction, and up she got, Mrs. Rowans, of Laxley Parva (maybe she's no acquaintance of yours), and away she goes to meet them, and about an hour after, or it might be less, comes the gipsy down to the house door with—"

At this minute Ned looked in and asked Mrs. Porter what she had done with the corn measure.

"Oh, is it you?" said Mrs. Cramp, looking at him in surprise. "It's here you live, is it? Hope I see you very well! How did you do with the gipsy yesterday? I sent her after you and Cramp with a very good will, I promise you."

"He!" exclaimed Mrs. Porter, turning to look at Ned, who had vanished instantaneously. "He is our man, you knew that?" she cried hastily to Mrs. Cramp. "And so he was away at the mill all yesterday, was he? I'll mill him—I'll see to paying him wage for him to go gipsying." Mrs. Porter was too angry to continue. But Mrs. Cramp, who had no quarrel with any one, but felt amicably towards all mankind, said serenely,—

"It's no use being out of the way with men. There's Cramp, I've tried it on him, but he's never to be moved, so I've give in and let him go his own way. But I didn't know as that was your man. I never saw him here: to be sure, it's not very often I comes here."

"Not by daylight," thought Mrs. Porter, who was well aware that her fowls suffered transportation, and that her woodstack was robbed, in the dusk of night; but she suppressed her thoughts, and answered, "He's not been here so very long, and if he takes to gipsying he won't be here much longer."

"Oh, he was only having a bit o' talk with Mrs. Bowans and Cramp. He'll never get no harm by coming to us; but I wonder he never told Cramp about what had happened here. I heard it by the children, poor things! There they are in the road, and hungry enough, I'll say that!"

Mrs. Porter's exasperation was at its height. Did the audacity of the woman go so far as to let her suppose she was going to empty her pot for the whole fry of the Cramps?

"Mrs. Cramp!" she cried, in a harsh, dry tone, pitched rather high, "it's near our dinner-time, and my husband will be in, and we've got a customer

or two betimes about now, so if you've done your broth—you're welcome to what you've had—but I want to right the room, and rub the fender."

"Oh, I hope I'll never be in the way of making a room comfortable, and I'm sure I wish you the best of appetites to your dinner," said Mrs. Cramp, rising, for she felt she had reached the bounds of the landlady's liberality. "I always begs of Cramp to deal with you when he gets out for a little treat, and I hope he does, 'specially as his friend lives with you, and I wonder he never told me that! but there, men is very close about some things, and I'm not one to trouble myself about other folk's business. Come, my dears, I hope you've kept away from the hedges. Never go nearst the hedges."

With this monition, solemnly delivered, Mrs. Cramp, gathering up her rags in the best way she could to make them cover her effectually (a proceeding requiring some arrangement), left the Royal Oak after a very polite leave-taking of Mrs. Porter, and an assurance that if she would any day walk up to the mill she would be extremely happy to see her!

"No doubt you will," said Mrs. Porter, when she was safe in the road; "as happy as I am to see your back; and whatever brought you here I don't know; but I must go and look after Ned. So it's to the mill he goes for a holiday when he tramps off, is it? I'll tramp him! I'm glad I know. And that fellow Cramp, that I hate the sight of, he owes me one-and-threepence to this day, and he's like to owe it! he never told me he knew him. And so he was there yesterday when I wanted him to cart the turnips! Oh yes, I'll see to his going visiting to Mrs. Cramp of the mill!"

All the time that Mrs. Porter was thus mentally discoursing she was sweeping the floor, rubbing the fender, and getting the dinner, and wishing in her heart she had not been so foolish as to show such hospitality to Mrs. Cramp. "Porter says it's dangerous to make 'em spiteful," she exclaimed; "but I don't believe it makes a bit of difference. She'll steal from me as easy next week, if she finds a chance, as if she'd been cuffed from the door."

As soon as Porter came in from the field she related to him in a very excited manner the facts that so agitated her.

"You'd best give Ned a jobation," he said; "but don't go to turn him sulky, he's a capital hand, and comes for little or nothing. I don't want to get rid of him; I didn't know he'd got a 'quaintance with any one about here."

Mrs. Porter settled her address to the delinquent Ned when he next made his appearance; but not that day had she a chance of delivering it. Indeed, she never saw him again till—but the reader shall hear when.

CHAPTER XX.—TARVIT'S CONFESSION.

BREAKFAST at Fothergill was just over, and while Mr. Banaster was glancing down the columns of the "Times," Miss Trigg had rushed to the hall to meet the postman.

"Would you believe it, Mr. Banaster! he has been served with a notice to quit," she exclaimed as she reappeared; "I have just heard from Honoria."

"Oh, yes, ma'am, that would be a necessary preliminary legal form," said Mr. Banaster, calmly laying aside his paper.

"Just listen—now *do* listen, brother Banaster. She has sent me a copy of the horrid thing. It begins 'Victoria, by the grace of God, of the United Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland, Queen, Defender of the Faith, to Michael Presgrave.'"

"Yes, ma'am, all writs, I suppose, begin in the same way. I hope you are not going to dispute her Majesty's title—that would be far worse than the attempt on Barons Dasset," said Mr. Banaster, rising from his chair.

"Just hear how it goes on—*do*, Mr. Banaster," cried Miss Trigg, in an anxious tone of voice, and persisting in reading out portions of the copied writ as Mr. Banaster made for the door.

"To the possession whereof Alan Stapylton—Listen, Mr. Banaster; isn't it audacious?"

"Very, ma'am, to question the law!" said Mr. Banaster, getting a step or two nearer the door, as Miss Trigg continued reading.

"Be entitled to eject all other persons therefrom. These are to will and command you, or such of you as deny the alleged title, within sixteen days after service hereof, to appear in our Court of Exchequer of Pleas to defend the said"—Mr. Banaster! is it possible you won't listen?" she cried, with much excitement.

"Yes, ma'am, quite possible; I really won't listen, for I have seen a writ of ejectment, and know exactly what it is like, as I told you," he said.

"Well, and it was delivered to him by a *woman*—a woman who got into his study on pretence of paying her rent. What do you think of that?"

Mr. Banaster smiled, as he replied, "What! did he keep so close as to make that necessary? Well! I am sorry he is so troubled, as he is ill."

"But a *woman*, Mr. Banaster! could a woman legally deliver it?" said Miss Trigg. "Honorias says her comfort is that it is illegal, and her brother need not notice it."

"Her brother knows better than that, ma'am; any one who can read and write may deliver it," said Mr. Banaster.

"Honorias fainted!" said Miss Trigg, shaking her head over the letter.

"Did she, ma'am? It's comforting to you to know she must have recovered before she could write all that!" said Mr. Banaster, walking now with a decided air to the door, passing through which and crossing the hall, he ascended the stairs towards his own sanctum, Miss Trigg following him, letter in hand.

"You have no feeling, Mr. Banaster; you are not like my dear friend!" she exclaimed, highly provoked at his serenity of manner.

"Like your friend? No, ma'am, that I admit; but really there is no cause for this distress about a necessary legal form which will do no harm in itself."

"Then you have no fears—no fears?" she cried, unwilling that he should escape her.

"Fears, ma'am?" said Mr. Banaster, standing by his study door with a look of security on his face; "no, I cannot say I have any fears, and I see no necessity for your indulging them—not by reason of *that* document," pointing to the copy of the writ. "I don't apprehend that Mr. Presgrave will suffer from the trial, and if your letter to Miss Honorias is not gone, and you like to add that as a p.s., I do not shrink from being responsible for it."

As he spoke he opened the door, and looking very grave as if he had made an important concession, wheeled slowly round and quitted the room.

Miss Trigg was divided between vexation at losing him when she had so much to talk about, and satisfaction about the pleasure she should have in giving the message. This satisfaction, however, diminished as she approached her writing table. It was only a faint echo of her vehement assertion of his confidence in the right of Mr. Presgrave to Dasset, and his certainty of maintaining that right. So, by the time she had unfolded the letter, she resolved to use only the spirit of the message in an embodiment of her own, a resolve which produced a form of words so friendly, so cordial, so glowing in goodwill and so confident of success, that Mr. Banaster would have regarded it with almost as much surprise as he did what now met his eyes when he closed the door of his study and faced about.

"You!" he exclaimed, unable to say another word.

"Yes, sir, I'm come," said the visitor.

"Where—where did you come from?" he demanded.

"Oh, sir, I've been far and near, north, south, east, and west; it's a long story to tell."

"But how did you get into this room?" inquired Mr. Banaster, still standing and staring at him with little less dismay than Miss Trigg showed at the bottled lizard.

"Up the back-stairs, sir. I asked the man to bring me up to you quiet, and he said I was to wait here till you came."

"Sit down, Tarvit, sit down; I can't say I'm *glad* to see you, for I don't know what you may have come for, and I—but what *have* you come for?"

Mr. Banaster seemed to gather up his usual cautious self-preservation system suddenly as he asked this.

"You can give a guess, sure, sir," said Tarvit. "I shouldn't have come if I could have kept away."

"Don't push that case with your elbow, man; you will knock over my silkworms," said Mr. Banaster, who had recovered a little from his surprise.

"Beg your pardon, sir," said Tarvit, "I was thinking too much about my business."

Mr. Banaster rose, and put the silkworm boxes straight, before he noticed his remark.

"Business! Well, and what is your business?"

"I've got plenty on hand, sir," said Tarvit, giving a glance to the two doors.

"Quite safe, no surprises here," said Mr. Banaster; "but first, if you have anything to tell concerning your master, Mr. Presgrave is the person for you to go to."

"Mr. Presgrave! why I'd as soon go into the jaws of a shark to escape a leaky ship," said Tarvit, with emotion.

"A bad alternative," said Mr. Banaster.

"I shouldn't have come to you about anybody but master, sir, and his business; my own is unpleasant enough, but I don't want to trouble you nor anybody with that," said Tarvit.

Mr. Banaster looked with some concern on his haggard face, and replied, "If you had taken my advice, you would never have got into trouble: a course of sin must needs be a course of sorrow sooner or later."

"Well, sir, you heard worse than the truth about me. If poor master was here he wouldn't turn his back on me."

"What brought you to England? Are you safe if known?" asked Mr. Banaster, after a pause.

"No, sir, not by a good deal; and if it hadn't been that I couldn't rest away, for I've got a little girl in this country, I should have kept in America."

Mr. Banaster looked as if to ask what business of his master's brought him to Fothergill.

Tarvit said, after a little thought how to arrange his story, "Where to begin I don't know, but perhaps the beginning's best, though it's a long way off."

"You see, sir, master died, as I may say, in my arms, and when he was dying, he said—"

"Stop! I thought he was shipwrecked; that's the story we heard," said Mr. Banaster, "and then it was confidently contradicted."

"No, sir, he died ashore after the shipwreck, and he made me promise that I would never neglect his poor wife, and if she lived to be a mother, never neglect her child."

"Oh, then, his wife did not go with him; it was reported she did, and that they were both lost in the vessel."

Tarvit shook his head.

"Nobody was lost. The crew and passengers were all taken off by the Albatross, but some died on shore from the hard work at the pumps, and the sufferings altogether. Master died. He left his wife behind, but he meant to fetch her out as soon as he'd seen how things lay there."

"Well, go on," said Mr. Banaster, seeing that Tarvit seemed about to flag in his story.

"Well, it must out. He gave me all he had, and I was to come home and see to his wife, and tell her all about him; but I couldn't come direct. I met with one stop and another, and at last, when I did make my passage, we were forced into the Bay of Biscay by terrible weather, and I was landed, and I stayed about and worked my way up, and I got to know a young woman that took to me as a countryman, and I married her."

"Very good, no harm in that," said Mr. Banaster.

"No," said Tarvit, with a look that conveyed "the harm is to come;" then he added, "She was sent home in charge of a child: it was Captain Stapylton's child. He and his wife died, and this child was to be sent to Mr. Keriol, and my wife, who had been nurse to them, was to take charge of it."

"Very good," said Mr. Banaster.

"Yes," said Tarvit, "so we came to England, and—and—"

"And then you inquired, of course, for your master's wife?"

"Yes, I did, and I found she was dead."

"And left a child or not?" inquired Mr. Banaster.

"Two," replied Tarvit.

"And you sought them out directly and told the family?"

Tarvit shook his head, and looked up at the ceiling.

"And pray what did you do?"

"I found they had got settled down comfortably, and I thought as they didn't seem to want anything, the money would be more use to me than them, so I let it be quiet."

Mr. Banaster folded his arms, and sat back in his chair, with a very severe look on his face.

"Yes, it was bad, I know it, but my wife was very fond of money, and I—I was vexed, but—I did it, and that's the truth."

"And what became of these children?" inquired Mr. Banaster.

"Well, sir, now I'm coming to it. Just before I

got into the riot, when the man was killed, and they swore away my life (but I didn't do it), I was in great want of money, and I bethought myself if I went to Miss Gayton (the old gentleman had been dead a many years then), she would pay me handsomely for giving news of Master John, and there wouldn't be any need to account to her for anything, only to make up some excuse why I never went before. Well, sir, Mr. Presgrave was there on a visit, and he told me it was of no use my seeing the old lady, but he would stand my friend and tell her all about it, and he told me to come again, and the next time I saw him, he said, 'You have never let any one know about this?' and I says, 'No, sir.' And then he told me as Miss Gayton hadn't any mind to own the children, and was going to leave the estate to somebody else, but she didn't want any talk about them, and if I kept quiet about it, in consideration of that, she would pay me a nice bit of money regular every year, besides giving me a present then."

"And you agreed?" said Mr. Banaster.

"I did, sir, more shame for me, remembering poor master; only there was this to be said, as she had no mind to leave the estate to the children it was no manner of use me putting 'em up to it, even if I'd known where they was."

"And you didn't know?" asked Mr. Banaster, with a frown.

"Well, sir, not rightly, but I might have found out, I suppose; more shame for me, I didn't. I thought the money would come very handy; and then that awkward business turned up, and I was obliged to run for it. My little one was put with my wife's mother, and we went as we could, and I find Mr. Presgrave has paid the money into the Laxley Bank quite regular ever since."

"Then if he has been such an honest paymaster for your services, what should make you fear to go to him?" asked Mr. Banaster, in the same severe tone.

"Why, this is it, sir. I'm downright ashamed of myself, and finding out that there's a young man started up to turn him out of Dasset, I thought I'd ease my conscience, that's never been comfortable, and let out who was the true heirs, if it come to heirship, for Master John's children *must* come before cousins and such like, you know, sir."

"Certainly, and you are prepared now to put forward the claim of these children?"

"I, sir—oh dear, sir, how could I do it? I can't show my face, but I thought if I came and told you, you would be able to do it. If I showed myself to Mr. Presgrave, and he found out what I meant to do, he'd soon let me see the inside of a prison, or maybe he'd try to buy me to be quiet again, and I've got no trust in myself that I shouldn't give in, specially when I was so in his power."

"And pray where are these children now?" asked Mr. Banaster.

"They're not children, sir, they're grown-up man and woman, and the young man's as like master as he can stare. They live at a place called Callisthon, with some relations of their mother's, and they go by the name of Trafford."

Mr. Banaster took all this deposition down in writing.

Tarvit then gave an account of the night's adventure at the Royal Oak, when he found out from the newspaper the fact of the title to Dasset being dis-

puted, and described how he had followed Farmer Robinson to find out from the papers contained in his pocket-book such particulars as might help his master's son to make good his claim on it. He made Mr. Banaster smile in spite of himself, as he told how carefully he had laid the farmer in the ditch, and how he had voluntarily gone into the pool to avoid suspicion of being concerned in the affair. "There's the pocket-book, sir," he said, drawing it from his breast. "I know there's nothing in it but papers about this business, for I heard him say so, and maybe they'll help you in it."

Mr. Banaster indignantly pushed the book away.

"That may be your way of doing things, it's not mine: the book must be returned to the farmer as it is by post."

Tarvit looked ashamed and surprised. "Well, sir, I'm sorry; I thought I was doing a good turn for poor master, and I didn't mind a little trouble for that. I couldn't think it was wrong."

"Yes, our views of right and wrong were never exactly the same, friend," said Mr. Banaster. "If you are certain that these are truly the children of your late master—" he added, pointing to the paper.

"Certain! why, sir, it's only to look at the young man to be certain," said Tarvit.

"And how can it be proved?"

"Oh, there must be a register of the marriage somewhere, and of their birth."

"Somewhere! Where?" asked Mr. Banaster.

"I can't tell you no further, sir, for I never knew young master was married till the great quarrel came, and old master told him to go, for he'd disinherited him. And then I said I'd go with him, and I did; and it was directly after, when he found he'd lost the estate, he went to America, and I along with him."

"How did you find out these young people now?" asked Mr. Banaster.

"I tracked 'em from a house in Boulderstow, where my wife was used to go, where they were born, to Mr. Trafford's, where they've been regular brought up like his own children."

"And you won't face Mr. Presgrave?"

"How can I, sir? I'm forced to skulk about as I can now, and I don't know as I should have come to you just yet, only that I found out how sharp Mr. Keriol is for the young man my wife brought over. He has been to her mother, and thinks to do a deal with her help; but she won't go far with him now I've told her she'd lose the yearly pay from Dassett if the old gentleman's turned out; she'll only pretend to help to get what she can."

"You seem a highly moral family!" said Mr. Banaster, with symptoms of disgust.

"Oh, sir, I think—but I'm so bad myself that it's no good throwing blame on others," said Tarvit, sadly.

"I won't flatter you—you are bad, very bad; it's time to mend," said Mr. Banaster, who could not help feeling sorry for him, nevertheless.

"That's my wish, sir. I've been working hard since I came to England not to spend what I brought with me, and I'm going to take out the child as soon as I can settle it; and I hope to bring her up well, and live and die over the sea, and make a good end at last."

"What do you mean by a good end?" Mr. Banaster asked.

"Die happy, I suppose," said Tarvit, looking down.

"And what do you consider to be necessary to ensure a happy death?" asked Mr. Banaster.

"Turning over a new leaf, and repenting, and that like," said Tarvit.

"And you believe that doing a little better, and being a little sorry, will ensure your being pardoned and taken to heaven?" said Mr. Banaster.

Tarvit tried to speak, but seemed at a loss for words. He remained silent after a few unfinished sentences.

"Tarvit, you are in dread as to the laws of the country; you know, if taken and convicted, it would probably go hard with you," said Mr. Banaster.

Tarvit was silent.

"You have more cause to fear another judgment, where there is no mercy for sin, not the least. In our courts you might find a clever advocate to get you off, but whom could you look to in that court where God, who knows all things, sits as judge? To have 'a happy end,' you must die with a well-founded hope that you have got pardon before you leave this life. Do you know this? I ask you because you talked of this happy end as if it were a thing that would come in any way you chose to expect it," said Mr. Banaster.

Tarvit hung down his head, and for some minutes there was silence, which Mr. Banaster broke, saying,—

"We will talk further on this subject another time, if you will; you must not leave England till this affair is cleared up and settled. I think it highly probable that now the excitement of the public mind is over, you might by good counsel get over the charge against you. I will try to help you. Meantime, where will you go?"

"I don't know," said Tarvit. "I am woeful sick of hiding about like a night-bird, and long to be where I can walk about and look people in the face, and not fear to be hailed by my name."

"I think you may probably be able to do that in England. I will do my best for you. Here is some money. Don't go far away. How shall I get at you if I want you?"

"A line to Meg Rowans, of Laxley Parva, sir, will find me, and I'll come straight!"

"As I am not sure of the right of these young people till I have seen Mr. Presgrave, and seen them and know more, you will be silent?"

"As the grave, sir," said Tarvit; "and I feel lighter of heart this day than I've done of a long time," he added, with a sigh of relief.

"Very good. It's a pity people take so much trouble to make their hearts heavy, when a light one is so much pleasanter," said Mr. Banaster.

"Brother Banaster, brother Banaster!" cried Miss Trigg's voice at the door.

"Go—the back-stairs," said Mr. Banaster, hastily, holding the handle of the door that led to the front ones, and at the same time seizing a small bottle from a shelf close by.

Tarvit had hardly disappeared, when the handle turned in Mr. Banaster's hand, and a push was made for entrance. Leaning against the door, he loosened the stopper, then replacing the bottle, opened the door, and made his usual ceremonious bow to Miss Trigg.

"I've finished my letter and sent it off!" she exclaimed.

"I hope it will give your friend as much pleasure as it has cost you trouble," he replied.

"I'm sure it will. Poor dear Honoria, she is so sensitive, so alive to kindness; and even Mr. Presgrave, though peculiar, as his best friends—"
Here Miss Trigg began to sniff as if something unsavoury were in the air. "What a smell of brimstone! or what is it, Mr. Banaster?"

"Merely some of my preserving fluid," he replied; "perfectly innocent, indeed wholesome, and purifying rather than otherwise."

Miss Trigg, applying her handkerchief to her nose, decamped without another word. "Perfectly innocent, ma'am," cried Mr. Banaster after her, as she rapidly descended the stairs; but, returning to his room, he said, as he sat thoughtfully in his chair, "I could not have borne her clitter clatter just now, I could not have borne it."

SIR HERBERT EDWARDES, K.C.B., K.C.S.I.

LITTLE did our few English traders suppose, about two hundred years ago, when cutting a ditch round their territory of a few acres on the banks of the Hooghly, that that "ditch" would give a *sobriquet* to "the City of Palaces," the capital of India. Little did they suppose that this paltry Byrsa would enlarge out into a city greater than Carthage, with territory embracing almost the whole of the Peninsula, with the Indian and Arabian Seas and the everlasting snows of the Himalayas as its natural barriers. Little did they suppose, from being a trembling few, with their lives in their hands, that they would become absolute masters of two hundred millions of people of various languages, nations, and creeds. Our connection with India is the romance of history, both as to the events and the men that figure in it. And this is true of no period more than within our own remembrance. A Clive and a Hastings have been continually reproduced, though under other names, to our own times. What master-minds appeared during the late Sepoy War! Men who, by their character as well as their deeds, brought honour to their country and to their time. Of one of these great characters, alas! lately vanished from among us, I subjoin a slight memoir.

Major-General Sir Herbert Edwardes was born, 12th November, 1819, at Frodley, in Shropshire. He was a son of the rector of the parish, whose untimely death deprived him of a father's care, which in consequence devolved upon his uncle. His education, commenced at Richmond, was concluded at King's College, London, with a view to his entering the legal profession. But the presentation of a cadetship for India altered the course of his life. The unexpected change in his career found him without the usual military education of cadets. But he was a genius, and so had resources which would supplement much that was necessary routine to others.

Before he became a soldier by profession, he had discovered those features of character which only wait for the occasion to be developed into greatness. He was quick of discernment and decided in conduct, of much vivacity, and capable of sustained application, although of a frail rather than of a robust constitution. He rapidly seized and solidly secured whatever in reading or in social intercourse qualified him for enterprise and the government of men. He

was an enthusiastic admirer of what was open, noble, and honourable, and the enemy of all mean arts, chicanery, and covert dealings. His countenance was at once the index of the whole man—open, calm, settled, and reflective; his features were finely shaped, regular, and manly. The general aspect of the countenance was firm yet gentle, while it quickly lighted up when acted upon by the stirred soul within; a shade of melancholy, which deepened more as life advanced, sweetly chastened that face upon which we loved to dwell. Such was the man, and so endowed, who in 1840 stood forth upon the arena of life at a time when stirring events were testing the prowess and abilities of the bravest and wisest in India.

Confident of his powers, and ambitious of success, Edwardes came to the front when we were struggling through the first Sikh War, following upon our Afghanistan disgrace. His conduct soon attracted the notice of his chiefs, and he became in consequence aide-de-camp to the commander-in-chief, Sir Hugh Gough, and afterwards assistant to Henry Lawrence, the first Resident at Lahore. These two distinguished men were not slow to discover that he was equal to any emergency, shrunk from no duty, and would face any danger. Indeed, it was true of him that his foresight was so extensive, and his execution so bold, prompt, and decisive, that resources seemed improvised by him for the emergency, and his action taken only to be crowned with brilliant success. While under the orders of his chiefs, he learned at once to obey and command, while his rare abilities were carefully tutored by study, observation, and reflection. He had not been long at his post, therefore, before his name was known throughout India as that of a scholar, a soldier, and a statesman. His writings already showed such a large understanding of Indian customs and manners, such intimacy with the native language and character, that they were read with pleasure as well as for instruction. Guided by that foresight and decision which were so remarkable in him, he could be the Fabius or Scipio to the occasion. He gave remarkable evidence of this in the events which, during Sir Henry Lawrence's absence in England, sprang out of the first Sikh War and necessitated the second.

Moolraj, the Sikh governor of Mooltan—a traitor, and in secret league with the disaffected chiefs and military, whom our protectorate had set aside—pretending dissatisfaction with his tenure of office, gave in his resignation. His successor was promptly despatched, under the authority of two British officers (one of them in the Civil Service), supported by an escort of 500 men. Our officers were assaulted at the entering in of the gate of Mooltan, and finally murdered, while the escort passed over to the traitor. The fall of this spark showed that the country was everywhere undermined by rebellion, ready to explode. At this time our young Lieutenant, who had the civil administration of the Trans-Indus territory, was occupied with the revenue settlement in Bunnoo. Saving a small escort and a few native attendants, he was alone in the country. At this moment a few pencil lines, written by one of the two officers, announcing their peril, were put into his hand. He immediately saw the danger of the position, and faced it with his usual decision. In his intercourse with the chiefs of the country he had formed a high opinion of the faithfulness and abilities of a Mooltane Pathan named Fouj-dar-Khan. He took him

into his counsels, and with him formed a scheme for his countrymen's rescue. He withdrew every boat and craft from the left to the right bank of the Indus, despatched a messenger to the Nawab of Bahwulpore, a professed British ally, summoning him to his side, and another with a like summons to Van Cortlandt, an officer in the Sikh service, who, with two regiments and some guns, lay detached in his rear; while, with a handful of men, subsidised from the neighbourhood by that extraordinary power of attraction and ascendancy which was a gift in him, he swept down eagle-winged to the rescue, fresh troops, mounted and accoutred, rallying as by magic to his summons as he advanced.

On arriving at Leia he heard of the horrible murder of his countrymen, which rendered the first object of his expedition useless. As he need not be told that Moolraj would be tampering with the surrounding chiefs, and securing the open country to strengthen his position, he did not commit himself to the folly of marching his little band upon the fortress-city, but recrossed the Indus, to secure himself, until, by a junction with the Nawab, and by increasing his own levies, he could strike some sudden effective blow, and, if he could not extinguish, confine the insurrection to the scene of its original outburst. Cut off from all communication with head-quarters, he was left entirely to himself, but then he was equal to himself in all his present hazard and danger. And not to his own need only, but his country's, for unless the fire were here speedily stamped out, a general conflagration might follow, which all our armies, headed by their impetuous commander-in-chief, might fail to quench—an alternative between victory at an awful price, and national disaster.

His unwearying zeal enabled him in a few days to seize upon an advantage of which he availed himself to the utmost, although at great odds and risk; "but then, was it not," he said, "on the anniversary of the battle of Waterloo, when an Englishman was invincible?" This advantage, succeeded in a few days by another, on which he left the broad stamp of his chivalry, enabled him to overawe the country, and confine the traitors to Mooltan. In the meantime he proceeded with his levies, raised from the adjacent country, and out of which, strange to say, he improvised an army; and, which is stranger still, this he did without subjecting the Indian exchequer to their support, but relying on the revenues of the country, which he at the same time so administered that the soldiers were well paid and equipped, and the people less burdened than under their native rulers. The territory was entirely at his will. The lesson was not lost upon the garrison and inhabitants of the fortress city, or upon the country at large; a lesson as valuable to our prestige as though the citadel had been carried by storm. It showed that no British officer could be outraged with impunity; it overawed the wavering and disaffected by suggesting to their minds that such daring, with means otherwise so unequal, must be backed by approaching armies with all the *matériel* for the field or the siege, while it compelled the traitors to unmask, and commit themselves prematurely to open revolt. Upon this conduct of our stripling lieutenant were based operations which led to the second Sikh War, and to its glorious termination (in which our hero shared a brilliant part), and which constituted us undisputed masters of a position stretching from the Himalayas to the Indian Ocean. Here may be said to close one splendid epoch of his

life, when at the age of twenty-eight, and after only eight years of service, he had gathered laurels in India and among applauding countrymen at home, which had been deemed glory enough for our oldest and bravest commanders.

Of this vast empire, the Valley of Peshawur, in the North-Western Provinces, which had been the scene of his consummate skill, and was the key of our whole dominion, became the seat of his government, which he administered with the greatest ability. His hand and genius were felt everywhere for the benefit of the population, the public security, the steady development of the resources of the country, and for keeping in check the lawless tribes which, in the outlying and mountainous districts, had from time immemorial been a terror to the inhabitants of the plain. I moved at that time over the vast theatre of our conquests, and of his administration, sometimes alone in remote districts, where a European was rarely seen, and yet with as much conscious security as in our thronged thoroughfares, ordered and regulated by a vigilant police. My palanquin has been abandoned by its bearers in the dead of the night, causing me less concern than had I been stranded at such an hour in a cab in Piccadilly.

While he was holding in his vigorous grasp the Affghan border-land, Sir Henry Lawrence was governing Rajpootana. Happy the people who were under their wise and provident care! and happy the country that could boast at such a juncture of two such sons! Alike in so many noble qualities, each loving the other, and each the depository of the other's ideas and convictions, they foresaw the little cloud which was to spread, darkening over all our sky, and burst at last upon us in the Sepoy War. At the sound of the first thunder-crash friends trembled breathless, and scarcely dared to look, hoping against hope, to Lucknow and Peshawur.

Our enemies held their breath, too—now in vicious hope for our augured fall, but now amazed, as our little scattered bands, favoured of God, by wise policy and indomitable courage levelled the mountains of impossibility for the return of peace and order.

"Why all these strong bastions and outposts?" I once asked of Colonel Herbert Edwardes. "Why all these patrols of irregular horse traversing the country, and why this jealousy of crossing the lines without a pass, while not a shadow anywhere dims our authority?" "Oh," he replied, laughing, "without these precautions here, the slumbers of our friends down in the 'Ditch' (Calcutta) would be brief enough."

Nearly at the same time, in a walk with Sir Henry Lawrence at Mount Aboo, I chanced to remark upon the phenomenon of forty thousand strangers holding in unwilling subjection two hundred millions of natives. "Oh!" he replied, "appearances are deceiving; the fair outside is that of a slumbering volcano, which may burst at any moment, as we shall find one of these days, to our cost. Our discipline, our arms, our treasures, are entrusted to a people who secretly hate us as foreigners, and with whom we have no common bond of sympathy." Yes, these two men saw the tempest-cloud rising and gathering, while others were crying, "Peace and safety! all things continue as they were." And when at last the hurricane burst to rage in fiery wrath around us, each of those master-spirits was at his post, his voice commanding clear through the storm, and his hand steady upon the helm, ready to do or die.

Imagine the apprehensions of Sir Henry Lawrence and Colonel Herbert Edwardes realised within two years after they uttered them! Imagine a hundred before. One of these giants was Colonel Herbert Edwardes, who providentially had returned from Calcutta in the very "nick of time." "If only,"



Herbert Edwardes

thousand of our soldiers, well disciplined, furnished with all the material of war, rising to crush our unsuspecting and scattered countrymen! That at the present hour we hold an inch of territory in the Peninsula is one of the greatest marvels of history. The stern endurance of our race, which would not yield, when we dared not hope, directed by the master-minds of a few giants of Old John Company, has, however, through God, not only secured the hold, but rendered our power and influence stronger than

it was argued in council, "the province of which he was commissioner could be held passive, if not in allegiance, it would have an immense moral effect, not only upon our countrymen everywhere beleaguered and struggling for existence, and upon the rebel hosts in arms against them, but upon those populations of the North-Western Provinces which, though still subject, were only watching for the issue to shape their conduct. And then as to Delhi, what an impetus it would be to our country-

men before it if they could be released from apprehensions in their rear. Assure them of the safety of the frontier, and they could devote all their energies to the reduction of that capital, upon which not only our prestige, but the existence of our Indian rule depended." But was this possible, it was asked, when the fidelity of the native regiments in the cantonments was doubtful, and the Affghans, as in the Sikh War, were ready again to rush through the fatal Khybur Pass to assist to our ruin—when the surrounding tribes were disaffected, and the neighbouring mountains full of lawless or bankrupt desperadoes who would find motive enough to join the general rush against us? The picture, truly, was about as hopeless as the hand of despair ever sketched. Colonel Edwardes, however, had taken counsel of Him with whom is the issue of all things, and so he was equal to the occasion. He was, moreover, one who welcomed responsibility when connected with duty and danger. Yes! he would answer for the safety of his position, confident of his influence over those he ruled, and those he held in check—nay, he engaged to raise a body of movable troops from these very desperadoes, who, in hope of spoil, and recovering their status in society, would by their rapid movements harass the enemy wherever he could be reached, and maintain in obedience those districts ready to throw off our yoke. The result justified his foresight. The men were raised, and by their appearing, as if by magic, at all points of the compass, overawed the inhabitants, annihilated rebel Sepoys wherever encountered; and then accompanying their gallant chief (John Nicholson) to Delhi, took part in that shock of arms which gave back the Mogul capital to our power, and proved the deathblow to treason throughout the empire.

And so our heavens were cleared of the hurricane at last. But when we came to look upon the wreck of wrath it had dealt in its sweep, alas! for our fond dream of Sepoy loyalty. An Eden before had become a "desolate wilderness;" flourishing cities, ruinous heaps; and the whole frame of well-ordered society was shattered, prostrate, or lying in savage distrust and sullen misrule—the labours of the wisest and the best gone like a shadow. And those glories of our country, whose names had been cherished household words, the Henry Lawrences and the John Nicholsons—men to whom lesser men were wont to look up as something more than of mortal mould—where were they? The survivors, who gathered with bitter tears their outraged dust, thought that our empire, bought back at such a price, had been dearly bought.

None witnessed the grief that darkened round his heart, when Herbert Edwardes heard of the death of the two* whom he loved so well. His deepest grief, however, was for Sir Henry Lawrence. He had been the polestar of his life—the father of his noblest aspirations; his the counsel and the conduct which had charmed and steadied him, amid all the snares which beset the path of the Indian cadet. And so when, in all the heat of the universal storm, the death-cry of his hero broke upon him from Lucknow, all life seemed quenched within him.

"It was an agony, but now forgot;"

for society must be saved, and to the duties of its

rescue and reconstruction he must subordinate all private sorrow.

After the storm had subsided into calm he found as much labour and anxiety in making the ship again seaworthy, as when she was foundering almost in mid-tempest. So onerous his duties now, that he must not think of hastening homeward to recruit his shattered health, and of joining his wife. His mind and hand must arrange and direct the important movement of his Province. He must be everywhere and in everything. The claims of self, in its dearest affections, must yield to those of public duty and humanity, and so he laboured on, heedless of the strain which heart and nature felt, a martyr to his post.

But, after all, this was not the fatal straw upon the camel's back—this was but part of the general whole which together consumed him. When we consider the strain and tension which his works involved, to say nothing of the wear and tear of labour, anxiety, and excitement, in scenes the most stirring, trying, and terrible—when we consider, too, the responsibility which lay consciously upon him, and the great mental labour which it necessitated—we wonder that a frame naturally delicate and of refined sensibility bore the ordeal half the time. Higher natures, however, seem often sustained by the very forces which exhaust ordinary ones. So it was in Sir Herbert Edwardes, and in him whom he emphatically styled his "father" and "example" in public life, Sir Henry Lawrence.

When at last his task was done, he hastened home to receive a hero-husband's best reward—the restoring care of a devoted and admiring wife, and the gratitude of his country. His hope was, on landing in England in 1860, that under such influences he should rally life to return to India to complete and crown the labour of his days. And this he adventured, when a four years' furlough had only partially restored his strength. His was not a mind to rust out, while he had power and motive to duty. And so he found himself again in India, devoting himself anew to multiform duties, with all the energy and success of his best days. But his overtaxed frame was again obliged to succumb; nature overwrought compelled him back to England in 1865, with fresh laurels indeed, but with health so strained, that it became sensitive to every pressure. In change of scene, and in the calm companionship of his wife and a few genial friends, he sought the necessary repose. But still, even then, he could not live in vain, or in complacent inaction. Wherever anything good was to be urged or effected, there, within his power, he was the spirit of it. From his irresponsible retirement he still also gave suggestive counsel for the benefit of India. His remaining leisure was devoted to preparing for the press the life of Sir Henry Lawrence; and who than he more fitted to portray his worth? Alas! that death snatched from his hand the pen, when now his task was all but done.

THE OFFICE PEN.

THE Office Pen is too well known to require any formal introduction to the reader. No one can glance at the stationers' shops, especially those in the neighbourhood of the Inns of Court, without recognising them by hundreds and thousands. One might com-

* Sir Henry Lawrence and John Nicholson.

pare them to the suits of old clothes which figure in Monmouth Street, inasmuch as, like the cast-off garments, they have run but a part of their career, and have a future before them the aspect of which it would be vain to predicate. Or one might regard them as an army of reserve, seeing that they have assuredly seen service and are liable to be called into action again. Sometimes the thought will cross one's mind—What sort of service is it that these close battalions of feathered troops have seen? and the speculations suggested by this idea are for the most part of a rather stern and matter-of-fact kind, and less provocative of mirthful than of melancholy feelings. For it is a difficult thing to imagine the ragged-ribbed office pen under the guiding clasp of the fair hand that indites a billet-doux on scented and tinted paper—or scribbling rapidly polite invitations to dinners, picnics, or evening parties—or poised in some poet's fingers as he pauses in thought "to shape the long roll of the hexameter"—or indeed as utilised in any very joyous or æsthetic manner. No—there is too ill-used and business-like a look about the thing to allow us to indulge in sunny views regarding it. On the other hand, one can very well imagine that it has worn its inky honours in different fields of action—that it has scrawled out a long lawyer's bill, for instance, causing a still longer face in the unfortunate client—that it has filled up the blank form of a writ citing some luckless defaulter to the sheriff's court—that it has served in executing a transfer of some poor fellow's little stock in the funds to pay calls from the Dead and Gone Goblin Company, Limited—that it has written "No effects" on the back of some rascal-born bank cheque whose defrauded holder looked in vain for the cash which was to save him from a catastrophe. Not but that business has its pleasant side as well as its unpleasant one; for cheques that are honoured, and other documents that speak of profit and not of loss, and reasonable charges, and timely receipts, and vouchers and dividends, are doubtless a part of the experience of the same writing implements; only somehow we are influenced by the sombre and dingy look of the article to regard its antecedents from a suspicious point of view. For the office pen is not a fascinating object to look at; its inky nose and wide-agape jaws being unpleasantly suggestive of some wretched creature "who lived neglected and died forlorn," while its rumpled and half-shorn plumage provokes a suspicion of unsteady conduct.

The office pen as an article of commerce presents to the casual observer a problem not immediately solved. He occasionally asks, seeing them everywhere in such liberal abundance, Where do they all come from? At the bottom of this pertinent question, and pointing to the true answer, lies the element of the value of time. The official day in London is but short, averaging, let us say, some six hours of real work, and how much of that work consists in writing most people know. Now, in banks, law-courts, public offices, counsel's consulting-rooms, and various other business centres, though there is time enough in the day for writing what has to be written, there is little time or no time at all for mending pens to write with. In court, you see the judge who is taking notes change his old pen for a new one every now and then—the members of the bar in attendance do the same: if you endorse a cheque at the bank you must do so with a pen which will never be mended unless you mend it yourself. It is the same to a greater or less

extent in all places of business, governmental or other; for, save in exceptional seasons when business is slack, time is too valuable to be frittered away in pen-mending, and therefore it is more economical to use new pens than to be frequently repairing old ones. As to the other question, How do all these myriads of rejected quills find their way into the market? that is no business of ours. It is possible that the Jew dealers in pens could give some information on this matter if they chose—but it is probable also that they wouldn't choose. In some cases the office pens go to certain dealers by contract, and in other cases they lapse as perquisites into the hands of somebody or other who has a prescriptive claim to them. What seems most certain is that very few of them are wasted; but that, having run their official career in a short space of time, they pass into the hands of the public, to be used up with due deliberation.

The man whose monotonous trade it is to drive the quill, and whose fate it is to scribble away from morn to eve for a living, is well aware of the merits of the office pen. It is his oldest acquaintance and most tried friend. He rarely buys a new pen or an uncut quill—the new article would not be half so well seasoned, or so tough, or of half so good a quality in relation to the price, and would not last half so long. The office pen cost originally double the sum per thousand at which it is retailed to the public at the close of its official life, and instead of being worse for its past career, is, for all practical purposes, when deftly mended, as good as new—when it is not, as it often is, rather better. Such is the opinion of little Tim Scroll, for example, who scribbles all day long for Tape the law-stationer (doing his drudgery in a garret in a Fetter Lane alley at so much the hundred folios). He will make two or three pennyworths of office pens last him a whole term. But then he does not out them to waste with his knife; on the contrary, he economises the article as he knows how, using some five or six of them turn and turn about—kneading the point, in a manner, between his thumb and forefinger, when it gets soft, and then allowing it to lie by and harden while the others are in use. As for cutting, all that is done in that way is a mere pointing when the nib becomes "moppy," perhaps accompanied by a slight flip to lengthen the slit a little. Tim, you see, is a painstaking economist, and gets the full value for his pence. But even Tim is not to be compared to that old classical commentator of the middle ages, whose name we are sorry to say has escaped us, who wrote a huge folio volume of polemics at the cost of several years labour, and of one solitary goose-quill, and who thus recorded that interesting fact on the last page:—

"With one sole pen I wrote this book,
Made of a grey goose quill;
A pen it was when it I took,
A pen I leave it still."

Which remarkable quatrain, if it have not the unobvious, brain-puzzling significance of Browning, or the tender grace of Tennyson, is at least full of matter, and states a notable exploit with commendable simplicity.

There is one thing that ought to be mentioned with regard to office pens, and that is, that owing to the high character they bear from their superior quality, they are often counterfeited by unscrupulous dealers who throw quantities of a spurious article into the market. These impositions are manufactured

from the cheapest refuse quills—are cut into pens by means of a hand machine, which does the business in a moment, and, being first tied in bundles, are dipped into ink hundreds at a time. They have never entered any office, or seen any service at all, and it is very little service that is to be got out of them beyond the practice they afford to the tyro in the art of pen-making, and the pleasure, if it be a pleasure, of cutting them up to the stump. The professional quill-driver is never taken in by these rubbishy things, but they are very generally bought up—the faculty of discriminating between good quills and bad ones being rather rare with that section of the public who invest in cheap goods.

TWO MONTHS IN PALESTINE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "TWO MONTHS IN SPAIN."

III.

BEFORE I proceed to describe what I saw in Jerusalem, the reader will be pleased to accompany me to Hebron, and also to the Jordan and Dead Sea.

For the first journey three of us made arrangements with a dragoman, a very active, good-tempered, and intelligent young man. Abraham was a Jew proselyte, educated at the school of Bishop Gobat, to all appearance a good and sincere Protestant. He spoke good English, also professing French, German, and Italian, besides his native Arabic. All arrangements were left to him to furnish every necessary at 35s. each, that is £5 5s. in all, for two days. There was no further guide necessary, except a man to look after the horses, who was mounted on a donkey, and carried some of our provisions. The four horses on which we and the dragoman were mounted turned out safe and excellent animals, and we had a very pleasant journey.

The distance from Jerusalem to Hebron is about twenty miles, and was accomplished, including stoppages, in seven hours. We left Bethlehem on our left till our return next day, and proceeded through a wild mountainous country, sometimes climbing up the mountain side between great boulders, or along slippery limestone declivities, where no animal but a goat could have kept a footing, or the sure-footed half-Arab horses we rode, finding it best to leave the reins slack on their necks, and let them take their own way.

As we approached the Valley of Hebron, or Esheol, the vegetation increased, and the slopes of the mountains were terraced with vineyards, fig-trees, and olives. The season was now past, but in spring and during the vintage the scene must be rich and beautiful. Before entering the town we made a short detour to see the so-called Oak of Abraham, under the shadow of which the patriarch is said to have sat when visited by the angels. It may be a lineal descendant of the patriarchal oak, and is now sole representative of its family. It may be any age from two to three hundred years; a venerable tree of more than 20 feet circumference. It has a smaller leaf than our English oak, and is, I believe, known to botanists as the terebinth oak.

We reached Hebron at 4 P.M., and put up at the house of a Jew, a very wretched and uncomfortable place. There were no windows in the house, but wooden boards for shutters; the bare little room into which we were shown overlooked a

stagnant pool, with the Mohammedan burying-ground beyond. Having still two hours of daylight, we started at once to see the great mosque over the Cave of Machpelah. We were not allowed to approach within forty paces of the main entrance. One of our party, attempting to advance up the passage leading to the Haram, was rudely insulted and called back, and our dragoman requested us not to advance any farther, as he could not guarantee our safety, for the Moslems of Hebron are the most fanatical in Palestine. We were guided round to some high ground to the north, where we were able to look down on the building, and to gather a fair idea of its construction. It forms a quadrangle of about 200 feet long by 120 feet wide. With the help of our glasses we were able to see those great cyclopean stones in the lower part of the wall which mark so distinctly the early Jewish portion of the building; the remainder of the building is clearly a mixture of Christian and Saracenic architecture.*

There is no city in Palestine, with the exception of Jerusalem, so often referred to in sacred history as Hebron, and indeed it was a city of importance long before Jerusalem was known to fame; and notwithstanding our disappointments, our visit was a very gratifying one. After visiting the two ancient pools, which still form reservoirs for the supply of water to the town, over one of which David hanged the murderers of Ishbosheth (2 Sam. iv. 12), we had a very uncomfortable night of it. One of our party, a restless dyspeptic individual, would not lie down on the suspicious rugs that were laid round the raised divan, but went round the walls with his slipper, and every now and then, just as we were getting into a little doze, slap would go the slipper against the wall, with an exclamation, "I've killed another dozen!" till at last in self-defence I was forced to get up and light a cigar, and wait patiently for daylight. When our dragoman came in we asked for some water to refresh ourselves, but these miserable wretches, who had driven a hard bargain with him, and had got fifteen francs for the use of the bare walls of a room, refused to give us even an earthen vessel to wash our face in, "as it would be defiled." They are still the same obstinate and "stiff-necked people." No amount of suffering seems to subdue them; and though they walk about here in dirt and rags, half bent before the insolent Moslems, I am persuaded that, if they had the power, they would be far more fanatical and intolerant than the Mohammedans.

We started soon after daylight, as we had a long day's work before us. We went over the same ground that we did the day before till we came to the three great pools of Solomon, about half way on the journey to Jerusalem, where we rested and had some refreshment. We again mounted, and riding a little distance to the north, we saw the fountain which supplies these great reservoirs. The largest of these pools is about 380 feet long by 230 feet broad. The lower two diminish in size. They are partly excavated, and partly built; they are evidently of Jewish construction, and probably as old as the time of David or Solomon. There are still some remains of

* The reader who may be desirous to pursue this inquiry further will find full details of the interior in the able work of Mr. Fergusson, on the "Architecture of Palestine," and in the learned researches of Dean Stanley, who accompanied the Prince of Wales to this place. As far as I am aware, the only persons from this country that have been admitted into the building have been the prince and his suite, Mr. Fergusson, and that eccentric young nobleman, the Marquis of Bute, and from them we gather very little information of the real tombs of the Patriarchs.

the aqueducts and stone pipes that conveyed these waters to Jerusalem. We rode down to the rich and now beautifully cultivated valley watered from

sanctum, with a marble slab under an altar, and on it a silver star encircled by a Latin inscription, the English of which is, "Here Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary." Near to this is the "Chapel of the Manger," which is represented by a marble trough! It would be tedious to detail the various chapels and their traditions with which the mind is mystified; we shall therefore retrace our steps through these dark passages, amid glimmering lamps, where the most sacred events of Christianity are caricatured in gilt, tinsel, and coloured daubs of saints, till one feels inclined to shut the eyes to the tawdry display, and think only of those "good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people." The most authentic and unquestioned objects in these vaults are the tomb of St. Jerome, and his study. The inspection of all these objects occupied us about an hour, when we ascended to the convent, and had some refreshment, and satisfied the good monk who attended us.

these pools, and laid out in gardens, which belong to private persons—one of them, we were told, to our Royal Prince Arthur.

Instead of retracing our steps, our dragoman took us up by a valley to Bethlehem, where we arrived soon after mid-day. The first and greatest object of interest here is "the Church of the Nativity." One has no great difficulty in believing this to be on or near the spot where our Saviour was born; the locality agrees with the sacred narrative. The church, with its three convents, forms a prominent object on the eastern ridge of the terraced hill on which the town is situated. For the style of building I must refer the reader to "Fergusson's Architecture." As regards the ancient church, with its long aisle and double rows of marble columns, and decayed mosaics, its materials and style, much is borrowed from the Romans, and no doubt dates from the time of the Empress Helena. The building is portioned out to the three rival churches, Greek, Latin, and Armenian, who seem to have lost sight of the great essentials of Christianity, love and charity towards our neighbours. Not long ago, our guide informed us, a very serious quarrel arose between two of the rival sects. One had intruded the end of his carpet on the sacred precincts of the other, and was ordered to remove it; angry words ensued, and each being backed up by his own devout and orthodox companions, a disgraceful row took place, which ended in bloodshed. From one of the chapels we were led down a flight of dark steps, and by a long, dimly-lighted passage entered the "Chapel of the Nativity,"

partly hewn out of the rock and lighted with numerous lamps. At one end is the small

We mounted our horses and started for the "Cave of Adullam," a distance of three miles, a very tiresome and fatiguing journey, over rocks and precipices, just such a place as David and his "distressed and discontented" companions would fly to for refuge. The approach to it is something fearful, and had it not been for the Arab guides we took with us, we should never have found it out. We were obliged to dismount and leave our horses behind, and to scramble up the face of the glen, often on our hands and feet, and creeping under projecting rocks, till we gained the mouth of the principal cave. We had taken candles with us, which we lighted when we got within. There are a succession of caves, the one leading into the other, reminding me of those



MOSQUE OVER THE CAVE OF MACHPELAH.



FORD OF JORDAN.

limestone caves which I visited a quarter of a century ago, on the southern coast of the Island of

Java, in which are found the edible birds'-nests, except that the former had not those long stalactites hanging down like great chandeliers from the roof, and sparkling in the light of our torches. Here everything was dark, dismal, and suffocating. We passed from one dark chamber into another, till our Arab guides lost, or pretended to have lost, their way back to the main entrance. We were tired and faint, and—like other Adullamites—I confess I felt greatly relieved when we got out into the light and open air.

Opposite to these caves, and beyond the valley, rises the isolated and artificial-looking mountain called the "Frank," or "Crusaders' Mountain." Having still two hours of daylight, we mounted our horses and rode across the wady, and up the steep winding path that leads to the top of the mountain. On gaining the summit, the view from the flat plateau is among the widest and grandest in Palestine. A portion of the Dead Sea and Valley of the Jordan seems to lie at our feet, and the whole range of the wilderness of Judea and the scenery round Jerusalem are distinctly marked. From the Roman ruins, and remains of old walls, it is clear that this must have been an important Roman station, and it is said to be the burying-place of Herod the Great, whose body was brought here from Jericho. We had a very rough ride back to Bethlehem, and nearly lost our way. It was now getting dusk, and it was still from seven to eight miles to Jerusalem. Fortunately we had a bright moonlight and fine evening, and at a hard canter we got home before the Jaffa Gate was closed, which is the only one kept open after sunset till 8 p.m.

The next day (Saturday) I made arrangements to join another party on Monday, to proceed to the Dead Sea and the Jordan. On Sunday we worshipped for the first time, in Christ's Church, on Mount Zion. The service was read by Bishop Gobat, and the sermon preached by the Rev. Mr. Bailey. We spent the afternoon on Mount Olivet, to which one returns again and again with renewed interest.

We had been so well pleased with our smart young dragoman, Abraham Samuel, that at my suggestion my new companions engaged him to accompany three of us to the Dead Sea and the Jordan. The arrangement was £3 each, for a journey of three days, including food, servants, Bedouin guard, and all necessary expenses. We started on Monday morning at 8 a.m., and rode out by Bethlehem. As my two companions had not seen the Church of the Nativity, we stopped here for an hour, going over the scenes which I have already described. We also made a short detour to the Tomb of Rachel. No doubt has ever been entertained that this is the place where "Rachel died, and was buried, on the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem." The pillar of which Moses spoke has long been swept away, and now the spot is covered by a small dome and Mohammedan mosque, alike revered by Christian, Jew, and Moslem. We were now joined by our Bedouin escort, a chivalrous-looking young sheik, one of the sons of a well-known old chief, who has his residence between Jerusalem and the Jordan, and possesses great influence among the tribes inhabiting this district. Our equipage consisted of six horses, three mules, and a donkey, with tents, beds, cooking utensils, and all that was necessary for camp life.

Our journey to Mar Saba lay through the wilderness of Judea, a scene of desolation that no pen or pencil can depict: the white limestone crags

and bleached hills of sand, and the few burnt up roofs of thistles, looked as if the blast of a furnace had passed over them. There was no road, and the common track led up and along the face of such slippery limestone slopes and rugged precipices that only a goat and wandering Bedouin could climb. There is nothing to relieve the wild and weary monotony till we reach the convent of Mar Saba. Our guide had brought the necessary pass from Jerusalem, and after a short parley from a little recess above the gate, we were admitted and conducted to a very comfortable chamber, with a raised divan round the walls, on which we spread our beds and quilts. While Abraham was preparing our dinner, one of the monks conducted us through the building to the tomb of its founder, St. Sabas,—the church, in which the brethren were engaged in devotion, and a chapel and charnel-house in which are shown the skulls of "10,000 martyrs," massacred by the Arabs. We expressed a wish to cross the valley to the opposite heights. A small door was opened overlooking an abrupt precipice, and a ladder passed out by which we descended till we got our footing below. We crossed the dry brook of the Kedron and ascended the face of the opposite hill. It was no easy task to get round and over the sharp points of rock, over which we assisted each other. But what a sight rewarded our labours! To the right and left was the deep gorge of the Kedron, and facing us the convent and detached cells of the monks, stuck like swallows' nests in the face of the glen, with stairs and passages cut out of the rock. There are about fifty of these monks, and they undergo a severe discipline, and are allowed no animal food, and look pale and careworn. It seems a sad negation of life, and at variance with all the active principles of Christianity, a sort of asylum for the helpless and imbecile. We had a fine clear moonlight night, and before turning in we lighted our cigars and had a long stroll on the top of our dormitory. The deep shadows of the glen seemed deeper still. The scattered buildings around us, and rising over our heads with all their outlines distinctly marked by the bright moonlight, formed a scene of sublime grandeur rarely to be seen and never to be forgotten.

On the following morning, soon after daylight, we left the convent, with an acknowledgment for the kindness and attention of the brethren, and with some sorrow and sympathy for these poor dreaming isolated men. The scenes through which we passed were wild and desolate, no human habitation being within sight. We saw occasionally a flock of goats clinging to the mountain sides, and cropping the dry weeds that find shelter in the crevices of the rock, tended by a ragged savage-looking Bedouin, with his long-barreled gun slung over his shoulder. Skirting the deep gorge of the Kedron, and along the rugged sides of the mountain, we came in sight of the Dead Sea after a ride of two hours, and in one and a half hours more we reached its shores, lying nearly 1,400 feet below the level of the sea, so that we had descended from Jerusalem 5,000 feet. The thermometer stood at 75°, and the atmosphere was somewhat oppressive. The calm sea lay like a sheet of silver amidst these barren hills. We stripped, and entered its water, so transparent that one could see to any depth. Before we got in to our armpits we were carried off our feet, and obliged to strike out. One of our party made for a small island a little way from the shore, but was clamorously called upon to return, as there

was a great depth of water, and if any mishap had occurred, no power could have saved him. We dismiss at once the fables about "no living thing surviving on its surface," as we saw both birds and vegetation around it. The density of the water is about three times that of the ocean, which will account for its buoyant power. In paddling about I got a few drops in my eyes, and for a few seconds I felt as if they were cut out of my head. On coming out we felt a little irritation on the skin, and as soon as we could dress we mounted and hurried on to the Jordan to get a fresh-water bath.

The ford at which the pilgrims bathe, and perhaps the very place at which our Saviour was baptized, is about an hour's ride from the Dead Sea, and no doubt near to where the children of Israel crossed "over against Jericho." (Joshua iii, 16.) The Jordan is not an attractive river. It winds through high muddy banks, and has a brown, dirty appearance. The current at this point was very strong, and we did not attempt to swim, and only walked in as far as we considered safe, enjoying the cool, refreshing bath. My companions filled their tin cans with the water. I had too much work before me thus to encumber myself. We now rode across the dry, barren plain, a distance of five miles, to Old Jericho, and found our tents pitched by the fountain of Elisha, or, as it is now called, "Ain-es-Sultan," from which flows a full clear stream, watering a perfect forest of trees and shrubs, of which no advantage is taken. The palmy days of Jericho are long past, and not one tree is now to be seen near the "City of Palms." We found this spot in the hands of a few wandering Bedouins, who only seek a little pasture for their flocks. The second Jericho of Herod, referred to in the New Testament, is about one and a half miles further down the valley. The site of both cities is very doubtful. In the neighbourhood of our camp there were four or five mounds, which are supposed to indicate the site of ancient Jericho. We went over these, and found that Lieut. Warren, R.E., had sunk several shafts, but without any satisfactory results. These mounds are evidently accumulations of *débris*, but nothing was found but loose stones and broken pottery.

Our intelligent dragoman had sent everything on before us, and on our return we found our beds arranged round the side of the tent, with a table in the centre, and an excellent dinner of four or five courses provided, commencing with well-seasoned sago soup, and ending with bread-pudding and fruit dessert. We were cautioned to keep our traps well together, in case of the prowling Bedouins finding something that struck their fancy, but I believe we were perfectly safe in the hands of our young sheik. In the morning, while they were striking the tents and getting ready for departure, we rode south to the small village and ruins of the Jericho of Herod, but saw nothing of interest to indicate the presence of any former city—nothing but the sad spectacle of the total neglect of all the most precious gifts, for nature has abundantly supplied every means to make this valley one of the most fertile spots on earth. The river Jordan has a fall of 800 feet from the sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea, and in its fall brings down as rich an alluvium as that of the Nile, which, by the simplest process of irrigation, might be carried over the whole plain between the two seas, yielding crops of cotton, sugar-cane, and grain of all kinds, sufficient for half a million of inhabitants, where now there is nothing but a forest of weeds, and a few

wandering Bedouins. While in this locality one's attention is naturally called to the supposed sites of the "Cities of the Plain." I, in common with many others who had their impressions from early writers, supposed that these cities were to the south of the Dead Sea, and were doubtless engulfed in its waters. From late reading and observation I have now formed a different opinion, and am inclined to think that the cities spoken of were in the fertile valley of the Jordan, to the north of the Dead Sea. If the reader will refer to the thirteenth chapter of Genesis, he will notice that "Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, like to the land of Egypt," etc. And while Abraham went westward to Mamre, the rich valley of Hebron, "Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan, and pitched his tent towards Sodom." This hypothesis is strengthened by the fact that Abraham, looking down from the heights near Hebron, could "see the smoke of the country rising like the smoke of a furnace." The total destruction and disappearance of these cities may easily be accounted for by the miraculous agency described in the nineteenth chapter of Genesis. Nor need we look for the ruins of these cities anywhere in the Dead Sea.

If time and circumstances had permitted, we should have remained here for two or three days, and explored those caves and early Christian relics on and around the Quarantania Mountain, which takes its name from the tradition of being the place of our Saviour's temptation. But this we were obliged to forego. On leaving the plains we began our ascent, over rocky precipices, and through the "Wilderness of Judea," over which our Saviour and his apostles must often have trodden on their way from the Jordan to Jerusalem. About mid-day we came to a fountain of delicious water, where we spread our carpet and had lunch. A number of shepherds had brought their flocks to this refreshing oasis, and pilgrims from Jerusalem to the Jordan were enjoying their frugal meal of brown bread and salt curd. An hour and a half's further ride brought us to the little Arab village of Bethany, a scene of sad disappointment. There is not a single relic to remind one of its importance in gospel history. Through a few scattered mud huts we were led to a deep vault, with a broken stone stair leading down to a dark chamber, which we were told was the tomb of Lazarus. There is nothing in this place calculated to realise our ideas of the Divine miracle. Neither is there in a large ruin pointed out as the house of Mary and Martha. It is sufficient to know that near to this spot lived that family "whom Jesus loved." Soon after leaving the village we rounded the eastern spur of Mount Olivet, and all at once the city of Jerusalem burst upon our sight. Here we dismounted and sent our horses on, and stood for some time contemplating the scene, from perhaps the very spot where our Saviour stood and "wept over the city." From this spot the city must have appeared then in all its splendour. We wound our way slowly down the eastern declivity, over that path by which our Saviour made his triumphal entry, described in the twenty-first chapter of St. Matthew, crossed the valley of Jehoshaphat, and entered the city by St. Stephen's Gate.

This was one of the pleasantest journeys I had in Palestine. We were importuned for backsheesh, as usual, by our young sheik and attendants. A trifle satisfied all claims, and we parted very good friends.

Varieties.

RAILWAY JOURNEY IN 1833.—Bills have passed for making railroads between London and Birmingham, and Birmingham and Liverpool. What a change will it produce in the intercourse! One conveyance will take between 100 and 200 passengers, and the journey will be made in a forenoon! Of the rapidity of the journey I had better experience on my return; but I may say now that, stoppages included, it may certainly be made at the rate of twenty miles an hour. I should have observed before that the most remarkable movements of the journey are those in which trains pass one another. The rapidity is such that there is no recognising the features of a traveller. On several occasions, the noise of the passing engines was like the whizzing of a rocket. Guards are stationed in the road, holding flags, to give notice to the drivers when to stop.—*Diary of Henry Crabb Robinson.*

BRITISH SHIPPING.—In the year 1868 the registered shipping of the United Kingdom (exclusive of river steamers) employed in our home and foreign trade comprised the unprecedented number of 22,250 vessels of 5,516,434 tons, employing 197,502 men, exclusive of masters—viz., 20,525 sailing vessels of 4,691,820 tons, employing 153,840 men, and 1,725 steam-vessels of 824,614 tons, employing 43,662 men. At the end of the year there stood registered as belonging to the United Kingdom 28,444 vessels of 5,780,530 tons—viz., 25,500 sailing vessels of 4,878,233 tons, and 2,944 steam-vessels of 902,297 tons. This is the highest tonnage ever recorded. There were built and registered in the United Kingdom in 1868, 879 sailing vessels of 300,477 tons, and 232 steam-vessels of 79,096 tons.

WHAT BECOMES OF THE TAXES?—The revenue of Great Britain is the largest in the known world, yet, with all our wealth, a smaller proportion of it is spent upon the Government itself than in other European States, as the following comparison of revenue appropriations will clearly prove:—

	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.
In Prussia, they spend 26 on War Forces, 17 on Debt, 57 on the State.			
In Russia, " 34 " 12 " 54 "			
In Spain, " 25 " 18 " 57 "			
In Portugal, " 26 " 23 " 51 "			
In Austria, " 29 " 27 " 44 "			
In France, " 26 " 31 " 43 "			
In Gt. Britain " 43 " 42 " 15 "			

It follows from this statement that while those six States spend a large proportion of their national income upon the Government, we spend 85 per cent. of ours on debt and war. There is truly no similar extravagance in the known world.—(From a Paper read before the National Reform Union, at Manchester, by Mr. Stokes.)

FANCY BREAD.—The Court of Queen's Bench have decided against the bakers the much-vexed question whether or no cottage loaves are "fancy bread" within the meaning of the Sale of Bread Act (6 and 7 Victoria, cap. 37), and, therefore, exempt from the requirement of being sold by weight. The judges considered it proved that at the date of the Act cottage loaves were uncommon, and, being more expensive to produce, were pointed at in the phrase "fancy bread," but that at the present day the phrase is not properly applicable to such loaves in consequence of their having in the interim become quite common. As cottage bread is rather more expensive to make than batch bread, the baker can recoup himself by advancing the price, but he should be compellable to sell by weight whatever kinds of bread are in common and ordinary use.

ENGLISH LIBERTY PRESERVED BY THE PURITANS.—So absolute was the authority of the Crown that the precious spark of liberty had been kindled, and was preserved, by the Puritans alone, and it was to this sect that the English owe the whole freedom of their constitution.—*Hume's History of England.*

VICISSITUDES OF FAMILIES.—A descendant of the Plantagenets was not long since living as a labourer at Kettering. The name had become shortened to Plant. The descendants of another Royal stock, the Earl of Kent, sixth son of Edward I, are to be found in very humble occupations. One was a butcher at Hales Owen, Mr. Joseph Smart; another, Mr. George Wilmot, kept the turnpike gate at Cooper's Bank, near Dudley. Another descendant of a Royal line, of the blood of the Duke of Gloucester, fifth son of Edward III, was the late sexton of St. George's, Hanover Square. There are many descendants of ancient families in humble life, while pretenders and rich parvenus assume the names. Very few of the peers are the lineal representatives of old houses. The Percy is a

Smithson, Paget is a Bailey, Marlborough is a Spencer, not a Churchill; Coke, Earl of Leicester, is not a Coke, but a Roberts; Earl Ducie is not a Moreton, but a Reynolds. It is said that not five hundred "county families" in England can trace their pedigree beyond the time of the suppression of the monasteries in the reign of Henry VIII. People used to look with reverence on the roll of Battle Abbey, but it is now known that the monks had no more scruples of conscience in interpolating a name to please the ambitious and powerful of their day, than a modern herald or seal-engraver at giving a retired grocer or broker any number of quarterings on his arms he may be willing to pay for.

TRAINED FOR SLAUGHTER.—At our camps of instruction—the largest, the most costly, and among the soldiers the least popular of which is Aldershot—a certain number of "field-days" commanded by a general and brilliant staff, afford, it is readily admitted, opportunities to commanding officers of seeing combinations of the different arms of the service, thereby teaching them to become familiar with the movements of large bodies of men. In the summer, in addition to them, it is the custom for a flying column, consisting generally of about two or three regiments of infantry, a regiment or two of cavalry, and a proportion of artillery and engineers, to be detached from the division, and to march to Sandhurst or Walmer, there to encamp for two or three days, and "drill," that is, have "field-days" precisely similar to the Aldershot drill-days. There is never any attempt on the part of the general, as in the great camps of Austria, Prussia, France, and Belgium, to select (which no doubt would be the case if his assistant quartermaster-general were an engineer officer) a position capable of being strengthened; or, when selected, to render it in any way defensible, either by throwing up slight field works, by the construction of obstacles to the approach of an enemy, such as palisades, abatis, etc., or by the careful packing and protection of the different arms. And, lastly, while divisions, battalions, and regiments of all the armies in Europe, some standing, some stooping, and some prostrate upon the ground, are learning by use of the pick and shovel to protect themselves from the murderous fire of the breech-loading rifle, so determined in the British service is the opposition to military science, in whatever form it may appear, that although the B troop of the Royal Engineer Train has for several seasons formed part and parcel of these great Aldershot reviews, it has never been allowed an opportunity of distributing to the troops the entrenching tools which, packed in waggons, commanded by engineer officers, guarded by sappers, and followed by pack horses, at considerable cost to the country, have been collected and organised expressly for the rapid "conveyance of entrenching tools for an army in the field."—*Sir Francis B. Head, Bart.*

PARROTS.—Readers of our anecdotes on parrots, and other bird fanciers, may be interested by the following price list, taken from the advertisement columns of "Land and Water."

Grey Parrots, commencing to talk, 40s. each.	
White Cockatoo	each £2 10 0
Leadback, ditto	each 3 3 0
Roselle Parakeet	each 1 10 0
Torquosine Parakeets	per pair 1 10 0
Budgagrain and Love Birds	per pair 0 18 0
Zebra and Chestnut Finches	per pair 0 16 0
Java Sparrows, Silverbeaks, African and St. Helena Waxbills	per pair 0 7 0
Coralbeaks, Orange-faced Waxbills, and Gordon Blues	per pair 0 10 0
Nonpareils	each 0 10 6
Indigo Birds	each 0 7 6
Diamond Sparrows	each 0 10 6
Redwing Starlings	each 0 12 6

Also a splendid variety of British song birds, including Blackbirds, Thrushes, Larks, Nightingales, Goldfinches, Bullfinches, etc., in full song. Canaries, young, 5s. each. A few very stout Canaries in full song, from 10s. 6d. each to 25s. each.

AURORA BOREALIS CONNECTED WITH CHANGE OF WEATHER.—Professor Christison, in an address as President of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, gave this result of observation for a long series of years. In nineteen out of twenty cases an appearance of Aurora had been followed by stormy and rainy weather the day after the display. In a letter to the "Times," commenting on this statement, Captain Chimmo, R.N., gave a result of six years' experience in Arctic regions, and five years in the north of Scotland. He also affirms that stormy weather follows, within twelve to twenty-four hours, in almost every instance; and, further, that during the Auroras unusual quantities of ozone have been present in the atmosphere.